

The Working Group on Institutions met to discuss their initial thoughts on the role of institutions in the City of Cincinnati and to make requests for more information on the existing institutions of the City. The discussion was divided into a few themes: services that the institutions should provide, interaction between institutions and the communities that house them, and cooperation between institutions.

There seem to be three types of services that the Working Group expects institutions to provide to the City. Recreational services are provided through arts and cultural institutions, like art museums. The City government is an institution that also provides recreational facilities and collaborates with private entities to use public spaces for festivals and other events. Institutions also provide social services to residents of Cincinnati through programs like the United Way and the Greater Cincinnati Health Council. The Working Group also discussed “operational” functions of institutions. These are institutions that provide services to facilitate economic activity in the City and region. For example, the Southwest Ohio Regional Transportation Authority (SORTA) and the Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport provide transportation options to Cincinnatians. Educational institutions, like universities and Cincinnati Public Schools, are included in social services. The Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber would also fit into this group. New services will be discussed in future meetings.

Aside from the services that institutions provide, the Working Group will consider the relationships between institutions and the surrounding communities. This issue relates mostly to the larger institutions, which can dominate traffic patterns, the built environment, and economic activity in the neighborhoods where they locate. Specific comments mentioned issues of historic conservation, safety issues, and employee demographics. This theme includes identifying large sites as potential locations for future institutions, and how to deal with heavy traffic around institutions. One Working Group member suggested that Form-Based Codes could help to more seamlessly incorporate institutions into surrounding residential areas and Neighborhood Business Districts.

Finally, the Working Group discussed how institutions could work better together. This includes cooperation between private institutions and public institutions.

*Institutions Working Group Meeting #1 Summary
Two Centennial Plaza, June 3, 2010*

For example, one comment suggested that the University of Cincinnati coordinate its bike plan with Cincinnati's newly-adopted Bike Plan. Another comment mentioned a summit for institutions to exchange ideas and facilitate collaboration. Based on some of these comments, the group may be interested in learning about Anchor Institution Transformation Zones and other institutional/public-private partnership concepts (see plancincinnati.org for link).